



**SEIUHealthcare.**  
United for Quality Care

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Before the Appropriations Committee

***In Support of* HR 11 and SR 12: RESOLUTION PROPOSING APPROVAL OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT AND THE STATE EMPLOYEES BARGAINING AGENT COALITION (SEBAC)**

Good Morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley and fellow members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Michele Brabant and I have been employed by the State for the past 15 years as a Case Manager for the Department of Developmental Services. I have lived in CT my entire life. I am here today to speak to you in support of House Resolution 11 and Senate Resolution 12.

When I first started with the state, I was just shy of turning 30 years old. I had come from the private sector where I worked for a non-profit agency who provided residential and vocational services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. While there, I applied to the state to be a DDS Case Manager. I was attracted to how the role allows one to advocate for individuals and their families, and helps our individuals lead productive lives as independently as possible. Also, I was a single mom to a then 4-year-old son, so the benefits and pay that state employment provided helped me make the decision to apply. Unfortunately, over the past 15 years, this job has changed dramatically. There have been many cuts to services that mean the lives of our most vulnerable citizens are put in jeopardy. As disability knows no racial, gender, or socioeconomic line, DDS supports an extremely diverse group of individuals and their families. DDS Case Managers, DMHAS Social Workers, Nurses, Doctors, and direct care workers – all members of 1199 - continue to be the backbone for services to CT citizens.

Now that we are less than 3 months away from the retirement tsunami, we all know that there are going to be individuals with no DDS support. We carry this work stress into our homes and back to our own families. Just this past year, I have had 2 close friends, also Case Managers, need in-patient help to address a substance abuse issue they developed with the stress of this job being one of the main reasons.

Because of what I have been able to testify before you here today, along with all of the other testimonies of my fellow 1199 brothers and sisters, I am urging you to vote YES on the SEBAC contract that not only promotes state employment, but gives recognition to

the thousands of state employees who have dedicated their lives to serving our state's most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your time.